

MARWIC

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MID-ATLANTIC REGION SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN

PENNSYLVANIA STATE SENATOR MIKE BRUBAKER VISITS LANCASTER WIC OPEN HOUSE

By Sharon Wasneuski, MS, WIC Director

Community Action Program (CAP) of Lancaster County, Inc. welcomed Pennsylvania State Senator Mike Brubaker to their WIC Open House on May 22. The event included WIC agency tours, ability to view the Sesame Street "Healthy Habits for Life" and Dr. Karp's "Happiest Baby on the Block" videos, and descriptions of program services by WIC staff.

Additionally, Open House attendees were introduced to the new WIC Foods through a presentation by the WIC Nutrition Education/Breastfeeding Coordinator. There were wonderful displays that included the new WIC foods, recipes, food guides, cookbooks, and delicious beverages and foods prepared with WIC foods were sampled. The event was well attended and was a great success. ■



OFFICIAL VISIT — PA State Senator Mike Brubaker (left) and CAP/Lancaster CEO Mark Esterbrook pose for a picture.

RANDOLPH-ELKINS WIC PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH FOODLAND TO PROMOTE HEALTHY HABITS

By Laura Kim Yokum, RD

The Randolph-Elkins WIC Program recently visited the Foodland in Petersburg, WV to encourage customers of whole or 2% milk to taste and purchase 1% milk. Customers were given the opportunity to try different brands of 1% milk along with information about the benefits of milk in a healthy diet.



GOOD HEALTH — Tanya Wright, WIC Community Outreach Liaison, provides milk samples for Foodland Store Manager Jim Rader and customer Richard Curran.

WV's Randolph-Elkins WIC Program is taking a grass-roots, community-based approach to encouraging families to transition to lowfat milk so WIC families will have the support needed to make lifestyle changes. Community messages stress reduced fat or fat-free milk contains the same vitamins and minerals found in whole milk, while education materials increase awareness that lowfat dairy foods, along with a healthy diet, may help reduce the risk of osteoporosis, hypertension, obesity and colon cancer.

Partnering with WIC authorized vendors to promote healthy habits is a community approach to strengthening nutrition messages linked to the new WIC food package. This assists in building WIC community support for easier transition and acceptance of program changes. ■

MARYLAND'S PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HOSTS FCNS OFFICIALS

By Deborah Morgan, Chief, Information Technology, Maryland WIC

On April 9, the Cheverly WIC Clinic in Maryland's Prince George's County had the honor of hosting Tim O'Connor, then Acting Food, Consumer and Nutrition Services (FCNS) Under Secretary; Janey Thornton, FCNS Deputy Under Secretary; and their assistants. The purpose of the visit was to showcase an effective WIC clinic to the Deputy Under Secretary and her staff and to help them gain a better understanding of WIC operations.

Yvette Jackson, Regional Mid-Atlantic Administrator and Diana Limbacher, Regional Director, also attended. Describing the Cheverly clinic as "a wonderful representation of a model WIC clinic," Ms. Limbacher shared that all were impressed with the staff's knowledge, enthusiasm, and care taken when serving clients and that it was rewarding to see the WIC clinic in action. ■



SMILE — Janey Thorton, Deputy Under Secretary, FCNS; and Nica Miano, Nutritionist, Cheverly WIC Clinic, pause for a quick photo.

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While every farmers' market is unique and vendors and clientele vary, one thing remains constant: the Food and Nutrition Service' (FNS) WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) help shape healthy communities by teaming up with local farmers. Since Congress established WIC FMNP in 1992 and the SFMNP in 2001, both programs have continuously provided fresh, locally grown produce to their participants. Moreover, both programs have proven beneficial for all involved, benefiting local farmers with enhanced marketing opportunities and WIC participants and eligible seniors with access to nutritious, locally grown produce.

In 2008, over 17,000 farmers, 3,100 farmers' markets, and 2,500 roadside stands provided fresh produce to more than 2.3 million WIC FMNP participants and 960,000 eligible senior citizens nationwide, including US Territories and Indian Tribal Organizations, with the Mid-Atlantic Region accounting for more than one-fifth of all served participants. Recognizing the beneficial relationship that these two programs create, the Mid-Atlantic States, through public and private partnerships, have pounced on the opportunity to better their



OPEN FOR BUSINESS — *Attending the New Brunswick Community Farmers' Market Ribbon-Cutting are (left to right) Upendra J. Chivukula, Assemblyman; Ronald G. Rios, Middlesex County Freeholder; Douglas H. Fisher, NJ Secretary of Agriculture; Richard L. McCormick, Rutgers University President; Colleen Goggins, Worldwide Chairman, Consumer Group Johnson & Johnson; Robert M Goodman, Executive Dean School of Environmental and Biological Sciences; Yvette Jackson, USDA FNS Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator.*

communities through WIC FMNP and SFMNP outreach events. In addition to providing citizens with fresh produce, outreach events focus on promoting healthy lifestyles, providing nutrition education, and bringing faith-based and communities groups together.

Here is a sampling of recent State events that illustrate some of the many efforts and partnerships ensuring all eligible persons are made aware of the WIC FMNP and SFMNP programs.

New Jersey – Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Yvette Jackson joined NJ Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher, Rutgers University President Richard McCormick, and other dignitaries at the grand opening celebration of the New Brunswick Community Farmers' Market. The event was made possible by the collaborative efforts of the USDA, Johnson & Johnson, Rutgers University, the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, the New Brunswick 4-H Club, and local farmers. While enjoying the tranquil, tree-lined backdrop of Rutgers Cook College's campus, attendees

availed themselves to fresh produce, healthy food recipes, food preparation demonstrations, and children's activities.

Pennsylvania – With approximately 1047 farm markets and roadside farms stands serving roughly 372,000 participants, Pennsylvania operates the largest FMNP and SFMNP programs in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Sharing in the excitement of the annual Farmers' Market located on the Farm Show Center grounds in Harrisburg, PA, Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Dennis Wolff and Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Yvette Jackson were both present to usher in this year's harvest season and promote the benefits of the SFMNP. Attendees enjoyed colorful, locally grown produce at its peak of freshness, and eligible seniors were able to sign-up for, receive, and redeem SFMNP food instruments on-site.

Maryland – Congresswoman Donna Edwards and Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Buddy Hance recently attended a National Farmers' Market Week celebration at the Silver Spring Farmers' Market. Leisurely strolling along the sunlit market in the heart of downtown Silver Spring, attendees welcomed the opportunity to purchase fresh, locally grown produce while enjoying healthy food demonstrations and nutritional education. Eligible participants were also able to take part in the Wholesome Wave Foundation's Double



MARKET STRATEGY — *Attending the MD Silver Spring Farmers' Market are (left to right) Donna Edwards, Congresswoman; Bernadine Prince, co-founder of FRESHFARM Markets; Buddy Hance, MD Secretary of Agriculture.*

PENNSYLVANIA'S COMMUNITY ACTION SOUTHWEST MOMS' SHOWER A HIT

By Leisa Shawley, Outreach/Retail Store Coordinator and IT Manager

The WIC Program at Pennsylvania's Community Action Southwest hosted another successful Moms' Shower in Washington County. There were 54 pregnant women or moms with children under two years of age that enjoyed a fun day of games, prizes and refreshments. The attendees were able to visit with 24 exhibitors who distributed information on their services. The WIC staff facilitated educational games where participants learned important information about parenting skills, feeding tips, car seat and water safety. This has always been a successful annual event. ■



SPIN TO WIN — *WIC Health Professional Vicki Nedrow spins the wheel in one of the education games.*



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CONGRESSIONAL STAFF VISIT DC'S CHILDREN'S NATIONAL MEDICAL CENTER WIC CLINIC



USHERING IN THE HARVEST — Attending the Harrisburg Farmers' Market are (left to right) Geoffrey Dunaway, PA Department of Agriculture Bureau Director; Dennis Wolff, PA Secretary of Agriculture; Yvette Jackson, USDA FNS Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator; Kendal Hanna, Executive Director of the Central PA Food Bank; Joe Quattrochi, Executive Director of PA Hunger Action Center.

Dollars program, a program that enables low-income residents to double the amount of food they can get when they use WIC or SFMNP coupons.

West Virginia – Since its inception, West Virginia's Capitol Market at the Capitol has been a rousing success, providing WIC FMNP and SFMNP participants with access to fresh produce all year round. Celebrating the annual National Farmers' Market Week, WV Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass read the National Farmers' Market Proclamation to a crowd of over 400 people. In addition to enjoying a bountiful harvest of fresh, ripe produce, this year's attendees were invited to enjoy a free, freshly roasted ear of corn and to take advantage of free nutritional education and food budgeting tips.

The Mid-Atlantic States will be holding additional FMNP and SFMNP outreach events throughout the fall. If you would like more information about or are aware of FMNP and SFMNP outreach events in your State, please contact Carol Smith at Carol.Smith@usda.fns.usda. For more information regarding the WIC FMNP and SFMNP, please go to www.fns.usda.gov/wic/FMNP. ■

Washington, DC's Children's Hospital hosted legislative staffs of members of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities. This subcommittee is part of the House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor.

The legislative staff was interested in learning about a WIC participant experience in the WIC clinic setting. The staff learned about the certification process, nutrition education efforts, breastfeeding promotion, Farmers' Market and WIC checks, and how WIC plays a role in supporting immunizations and healthcare for WIC participants. Team Leader Roberta Edwards and her staff at Children's WIC clinic had the visitors observe firsthand how the daily operations of the clinic flow with participants present.

National WIC Association Public Policy Nutritionist Tae Chong and DC WIC Program Director Gloria Clark were also present to give the staffers national and state perspectives of WIC. ■



OFFICIAL VISIT — Children's Hospital WIC staff (Ana Alvarez, Roberta Edwards and Ana Paz) are pictured with Congressional staff, and Tae Chong and Gloria Clark.

VIRGINIA WIC HOSTS VENA AND FOOD PACKAGE TRAINING

Virginia WIC hosted a VENA and Food Package training road show. The training lasted for two days, with a total of 10 trainings held across the state.

The guest facilitator for the VENA sessions was Molly Kellogg, RD, LCSW. Molly covered all aspects of counseling using a participant-centered approach. Videos and activities complemented her interactive teaching style, and Virginia WIC employees report that the training reinforced everything they have been learning about VENA and encouraged them to try their new skills.

WIC Nutrition Liaisons Meghan Garrett, Paula Garrett, and Nicole Keeney presented the new food package, covering the big picture as well as the "nuts and bolts" of how the clinic operations will change with the new food package. This was a great opportunity for all employees to ask questions and talk with each other about all of the changes.

For more information about Molly Kellogg, read her own story on page 6. ■



LISTEN UP — Kerry Williams (standing) of Virginia WIC's Chesterfield Health District leads his table in a group discussion activity.

WEST VIRGINIA'S RANDOLPH ELKINS WIC RECEIVES HANDMADE QUILTS

By Lori Leach, Nutritionist

Once again the community of Elkins, WV, has embraced the Randolph-Elkins Health Department WIC Program by offering community service which supports participants.

In December 2008, Sandra Godwin, President of Randolph County Community Education Outreach Service (CEOS), formerly the Homemakers Club, presented the Elkins WIC Program with several handmade quilts to distribute to WIC participants.

One time per year, the CEOS complete a community service project. The Elkins WIC clinic was chosen as a way for the CEOS to promote and support breastfeeding in the Randolph County area. Breastfeeding WIC mothers were each presented a handmade quilt to celebrate their commitment to providing their children the gold standard. ■

SNUGGLE BUG — The Randolph County Community Educational Outreach Service donated handmade quilts which were presented to breastfeeding WIC mothers. Pictured (left to right) are WIC Clerk Bunny Simmons, breastfeeding WIC mother Tiffany Stark and son Gavin, and Sandra Godwin, President of Randolph County Community Educational Outreach Service.



VENDOR TRAININGS IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS GET EVERYONE READY TO IMPLEMENT NEW FOOD PACKAGES

By Lorna Concepcion, MS, RD

The Virgin Islands WIC Program is preparing for the new food package implementation. The first series of vendor trainings were held in March, one on the island of St. Thomas and one on St. Croix. Vendors received first-hand information about the new foods and food specifications and the new food list from Nutrition Education Coordinator, Lorna Concepcion. They then received information on how to handle the regular, as well as the fruits and vegetable checks, stocking requirements and other vendor issues from Systems Analyst Ermine Hendrickson, who is also assisting in the vendor section. We also had a visit from a food supplier for Happy Products from Puerto Rico to discuss their products to include a soy beverage that meets WIC specifications. ■



TRAINING SESSION — Lorna Concepcion (top left) and Ermine Hendrickson (top right) led a training in St. Croix.



CLASS AT WORK — WIC Junior Programmer Shawn Canegata organizes materials and participants review handouts.

FRANNIE FOXHOUND VISITS VIRGINIA'S WESTERN TIDEWATER HEALTH DISTRICT

Early this summer, Suffolk, Virginia opened a new Human and Health Services Building. After years of being in separate buildings, the Health Department and Department of Social Services are now united under one roof for the convenience of those we serve.

In coordination with the ribbon-cutting and grand opening ceremony, the WIC Program held its monthly Saturday clinic. The participants who attended were treated to hot dogs and snow cones. (Disclaimer: The WIC staff was not consulted on the food items offered!)

In addition, who should make an appearance to greet the children, but Frannie Foxhound, the Virginia WIC Program mascot! Frannie presented each child with a small stuffed animal to take home! ■

GUEST APPEARANCE — Frannie Foxhound is having fun with Brittney Key and her children, Amari, 2½, and Bria, 6 months.



ANNUAL FARMERS' MARKET COUPON DAY IN FREDERICK COUNTY, MD A SUCCESS

By Katie Keirle, WIC Services Associate, Frederick County WIC

On June 18, Maryland's Frederick County WIC Program held its 17th Annual Farmers' Market Coupon Day. During this very special day, participants were given the opportunity to come into the WIC office between 8:30 am and 6:00 pm without an appointment to pick up their farmers' market coupons. The lobby was filled with participants as early as 8:00 am as they were excited about receiving coupons for locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs! Participant ID folders were collected at the front window and participants watched the video explaining the upcoming food package changes while waiting to be called into the conference room in shifts. Once in the conference room, a WIC Associate thanked everyone for coming to WIC to get their coupons, then explained how to use the coupons and the market locations and showed the "door prize" which everyone would receive (this year it was a pot holder and a recipe book).

Meanwhile, several staff members in the back of the room prepared to give out the coupons – stuffing each folder with farmers' market information and map fliers and stamping the folder to indicate that the family had come to pick up their coupons. The process of calling participants back to sign for their coupons, receive their door prize, and pick up any nutrition handouts of interest to them went quickly. The entire process, including the presentation in the conference room and picking up the coupons, took only 15 to 25 minutes for each participant.

Farmers' Market Coupon Day was a wonderful experience for both the participants and staff. Participants were pleased that they received their coupons quickly and were able to purchase fruits, vegetables and herbs the same day at the downtown Frederick Farmers' Market. Out of a total allotment of 1,450 coupon booklets, 890 were given out on this day. Staff members enjoyed seeing all the clients come in to get their coupons and look forward to seeing the same or even greater level of success and enthusiasm next year. ■

NEW JERSEY'S GLOUCESTER COUNTY WIC WORKS TO REDUCE PREMATURE BIRTH RATE

By Danielle M. Dixon, RD, Gloucester County WIC

New Jersey State Senator Fred H. Madden (D-4th) declared May as "Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Month" back in 2007. Since that time, the Gloucester County Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies (HMHB) Coalition has celebrated with health fairs targeted at healthy outcomes for moms and babies.

This year the theme was "Preventing Premature Births in Gloucester County." Our idea for this year's theme came from the recent report from the March of Dimes for the 2008 premature birth report card. New Jersey unfortunately

scored very low, meaning there is a high rate of premature deliveries in our state. There is a rise in premature births nationwide due to increased multi-fetal pregnancies, elective c-sections and poor access to prenatal care.

Danielle M. Dixon, Assistant Coordinator for Gloucester County WIC, chairs the Gloucester County HMHB group and coordinated the health fair with a regularly scheduled WIC clinic day. Moms received education and referrals from a variety of local resources (Social Services, Robin's Nest, Mom's Quit Connection, AmeriHealth, WIC, Weisman, Arch of

Gloucester County, and Wipe out Lead, Gloucester County Health Department, Perinatal Addictions Project, and Southwest Council) and enjoyed some healthy snacks. Door prizes and hourly drawings for giveaways were enjoyed by all 32 families that attended.

The main goal was to make moms aware of agencies available to help them have healthy pregnancies either now or in the future. All participants were encouraged to share the information with friends and relatives. ■

PUERTO RICO'S BAYAMON WIC REGION CELEBRATES RETIREMENT

By Alma L. Orgeta, Outreach Nutritionist

Carmen S. Ramos, Nutrition Supervisor of Puerto Rico's Bayamon WIC Region, recently celebrated 31 years of working in the WIC Program. In honor of this milestone, the employees of the Region hosted her retirement event on May 22.

They reviewed and highlighted Carmen's achievements, which included being a breastfeeding mother, hosting the first conventions for breastfeeding women, as well as initiating weight control projects for children in WIC, and the popular Nutrifestivals. She leaves a legacy of learning and good deeds. She was the first nutritionist in the WIC Program named for the region.

The new Executive Director of the Puerto Rico WIC Program, Jaime Rivera, former director of FNS Caribbean Office, made several recommendations to take advantage of Carmen's retirement. The staff of each of the Region's clinics made a special presentation to say thank you and farewell.

Carmen expressed her feelings by quoting a passage from the Bible, "I have finished the race; I have the battle and keep the faith."

Attending the festivities on behalf of Dr. Arlene Romero, Director of the Department of Health of Bayamon Region, was Nellie Zayas of the Immunization Program, who read a message from Dr. Romero. In addition to her good wishes, Nellie thanked the WIC Program for its assistance in childhood immunization initiatives.

Jeanette Canino, President of the Nutritionist and Dietitian College of Puerto Rico, thanked Carmen for her passion on behalf of her profession. ■



RETIRED BUT NOT FORGOTTEN — Carmen Ramos is surrounded by colleagues during her retirement event.

NEW JERSEY'S TRENTON WIC CELEBRATES NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH AND THE NEW WIC FOOD PACKAGE

By Jennifer Nagy, Nutritionist, Trenton WIC Program

New Jersey's Trenton WIC Program celebrated National Nutrition Month this year in grand style. On March 24, the staff held an open house for WIC participants to see and sample some of the foods to be included in the new WIC food package coming in October. Our objective was to provide information on the new WIC food package and show the relationship between healthy eating and the upcoming changes. We created a display of some of the new WIC foods, provided samples of new WIC foods, made smoothies using new and existing WIC food items.



BON APPETITE — Chef Will Nagy provided a cooking demonstration and made smoothies for Trenton WIC participants.

A chef was on-site and conducted a cooking demonstration of healthy recipes using new WIC foods. In addition we conducted a milk challenge where participants were asked to sample whole and 2% milk to see if they could tell the difference between the two.

We obtained a proclamation from the Mayor of Trenton proclaiming March as National Nutrition Month and displayed it prominently for our participants to see. Honored guests included the City's Health Officer and staff from the State WIC and USDA Regional offices. The event was a lot of fun for both participants and WIC staff. ■



COMING SOON — Pictured is a display made of some of the foods to be included in the new WIC Food Package.

WEST VIRGINIA'S SHENANDOAH WIC PARTNERS WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES AND LIBRARY TO BRING NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH MESSAGE TO THE COMMUNITY

By Pamela Rigglesman, Shenandoah Valley WIC Program Outreach Coordinator

Participants of West Virginia's Shenandoah Valley WIC Program were invited to the Keyser Library during story hour. To promote National Nutrition Month, the book "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," by Eric Carle, seemed the best choice since it focuses on eating fruits and vegetables. Martin's Food Store made a gracious donation of apples, oranges, plums and pears so children could taste each food as the very hungry caterpillar weaved his way through the story.

The reading hour concluded with "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie," by Laura Joffe Numeroff, while McDonalds Restaurant of Keyser donated little bags of cookies.

WIC also prepared goodie bags for the children and their parents on nutrition and exercise. ■

SUCCESS WITH VALPAK COUPONS TO PROMOTE WIC IN WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

By Janice Besecker, Coordinator, Washington County WIC

Maryland's Washington County WIC has been utilizing the area ValPak coupon packet as an extremely successful advertising source for the past four years. We specifically use the ad each spring to promote the benefits of the Program and provide the community with the new income guidelines. We've tried to answer the basic questions regarding WIC eligibility as well, including statements regarding employment status, guardianship, and adjunct eligibility. The ad also provides some examples of how WIC addresses their nutritional needs.

We have found this route of advertising to be most successful because it is delivered to 95% of the homes in our county – 60,000 homes during each distribution for approximately 3 cents per piece. We have not found another advertising opportunity that reaches that volume of households for the cost! More importantly, potential clients do not need to have a magazine or newspaper subscription or have the radio or TV on at the right time to hear a WIC ad; the ValPak is automatically delivered to their home. Often a potential client does not see the ad themselves, but a friend or family member may point it out to them and encourage them to call.

The Washington County staff always knows when the ValPak envelope has been mailed as the phones begin ringing. We receive calls to schedule new certification appointments, and also from clients who stopped using our benefits but would like to re-apply as well! We plan to continue to use this successful advertising resource. ■



MY JOURNEY BACK TO WIC

By Molly Kellogg, RD, LCSW

It was the summer of 1979. I had a newly minted master's degree in nutrition and was looking to make a difference in the world. The Montgomery County (PA) WIC Program was looking for a coordinator, and I was in the right place at the right time. I jumped in, got up to speed on writing vouchers (much of it by hand in those days) and counseled mothers to feed their children well. I loved the job from the first day. What a treat! I was talking with parents of young children, rather than spending my day with sick people in a hospital, which is what I had feared I would be doing upon graduation. WIC was growing by leaps and bounds in those days. In 18 months, we tripled our sites and hired lots more staff. I found myself spending less and less time with moms and more time keeping things running. It was gratifying to build this important program, but I missed the client contact.

I got lucky again and found a hospital that needed an outpatient dietitian for its prenatal and pediatric clinics. For eight more years, I worked with moms and moms-to-be. I didn't work directly with WIC, but I made sure all those eligible made it to the WIC office with the paperwork they needed.

Skip forward almost 20 years to 2008. The VENA initiative has come out of the USDA, and states are looking for trainers of counseling skills to bring staff skill levels up to the VENA client-centered guidelines. In those 20 years, I had started a private practice, begun to specialize in eating disorders, gone to social work school and become a psychotherapist. For the last six years, I had also been writing and training health professionals in the counseling skills I picked up over the years.

When I was contacted by the Delaware and then Virginia Departments of Health, I was honored and excited to return to this very important program. What a treat to bring my new skills back to those working with WIC families and once again have impact on this important population. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with WIC staff at training sessions in Dover, DE, and in 10 towns in Virginia. It was with sadness that I left WIC all those years ago. Little did I know I would come back almost 30 years later. ■

WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY HEALTH DENTAL PROGRAM AND WIC TEAM TOGETHER TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE

By Jenna Rose, MA, RRD, LD, Nutrition and Outreach Coordinator

Valley Health Dental Program and West Virginia's Cabell WIC office are working closely together to provide WIC participants easy access to dental care for their children. Educating parents on the importance of proper oral health for infants and children has remained a goal within the WV Nutrition Education annual plan. One way the Cabell WIC office has chosen to meet this goal is by hosting a Valley Health dentist and dental assistant monthly at the WIC office. The WIC staff is educating parents on the importance of early dental care and offering dental appointments to participants.

At a recent "dental day," the dentist saw 25 children. Participants are excited to be able to bring their children to WIC for dental care since they are already comfortable with the setting. The dentist is checking and brushing their teeth, and doing fluoride treatments if necessary. In addition, the dentist is also referring children to pediatric dentists if needed for areas such as gum disease and baby bottle tooth decay. Linda Gray, of the Valley Health Dental Program, educates parents during our education classes. She provides facts about dental care and uses a kid friendly puppet to show parents how to brush their children's teeth. We will continue to offer dental exams to our WIC participants. This is one example how partnerships can form and benefit families. ■

PA'S ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT WIC CELEBRATES 35TH ANNIVERSARY WITH OUTREACH EVENT

By Carol Janesko, RD, LDN, Outreach Coordinator

Pennsylvania's Allegheny County Health Department WIC Program wanted to have an outreach community event to celebrate their 35th anniversary. Carol Janesko contacted the Program and Events Manager with Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership and requested an event table on Market Square in Downtown Pittsburgh for the occasion. Every Thursday during June, July and August, the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership has a free concert, the Market Square Farmers' Market and usually a few other vendors (pierogie sellers, a baked goods tent, a fresh organic juice tent, and a fresh salsa tent) and it runs from 10:30 am - 2:00 pm to catch the lunchtime crowd.

With WIC's persistence, the Partnership agreed to have a WIC display and they even provided an information tent for WIC to use. WIC provided stress balls, imprinted with contact information, in the shape of strawberries, cauliflower, and carrots to catch the eyes and ears of the public so the staff could promote the WIC Program. WIC staff also promoted the use of fresh fruits and vegetables with the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program that started on June 1. ■



REACHING OUT IN PITTSBURGH — Carol Janesko, RD, LDN, Outreach Coordinator (left) and Sheila Brown, Clerk 2 and Outreach Assistant, distributed approximately 600 stress balls and an assortment of applications, laminated posters, and the "All About the WIC Program" flyers.

FREDERICK COUNTY (MARYLAND) WIC OUTREACH: A YEAR REMEMBERED

By Vida Penn, RN, Frederick County WIC

The years go by so quickly, and as we begin a new fiscal year, we remember the year we just completed. When we realize that this time last year our caseload was 4300 clients and now it is 4775 – a difference of 475 clients – we know why we are busy. Part of our growth we believe is due to our increased outreach efforts:

Magazine advertising: We placed full- or half-page ads in a number of magazines, including Buena Gente (an all-Spanish bi-monthly), Frederick Child, Frederick County Guide, and Frederick Family. This year we joined with Washington County WIC Program to create a combined ad for Child Guide, distributed in both counties.

Newspaper advertising: Our local newspapers are the Frederick News Post and the Frederick County Gazette. The Frederick News Post publishes a magazine supplement called Senior Living. It targets residents over age 62. Our ad is directed toward grandparents, who often care for their grandchildren. The Gazette publishes a Back to School special edition and a Community Guide. Frederick County WIC advertises in both.

Advertising through home mailing groups: For years, we have done business with Mother Martin's Coupons and Valpak. Both deliver booklets of coupons and advertisements to thousands of homes in the area. Often a new client walks into WIC with one of these ads.

Television, radio, and movie theater advertising: Last year, we were seen on TV and on the big screen (at 10 Hoyt Theaters and 16 Westview Theaters) and heard on two radio stations (WFRE and WFMD). Many clients tell us that they heard about us through these sources.

Additional community outreach: We mailed out 1172 birthday cards encouraging recertification and 358 congratulatory letters on the birth of new babies; and participated in eleven community activities. We also mailed 717 letters to employment agencies, child care facilities, churches, cleaning services, community services and organizations, nursing homes, physicians, and restaurants; these letters transmitted WIC information for distribution to clients, patients and employees.

We are proud of our efforts to keep the community informed about WIC and to encourage eligible individuals to join our Program. ■

BABIES EVERYWHERE AT PENNSYLVANIA'S CHESTER COUNTY WIC

By Paula M. Taylor, CLC, Outreach/Breastfeeding Coordinator
Chester County Health Department WIC Program

While babies are an important part of the work we do at WIC, it is usually our participants who are having them, but last summer, four of our nine nutritionists at the Chester County WIC Program were expecting! For Kathleen McCarthy, Heidi Burman, and Amy Armstrong this was baby #1, while Diana Cann was expecting baby #2. The rest of us felt like we were giving birth also – helping out in the clinic when someone was running late due to morning sickness, lending a hand when they needed to go to a doctor visit, or offering words of wisdom from our accumulated years of pregnancy.

The first arrival was Max, born on August 11, 2008, to Heidi and Steve Burman. Max arrived a little prematurely, had a low birth weight, but is making great progress. His mom proudly reports he has never had formula! From the beginning she needed to pump in addition to nursing, then found it was easier for Max to take all his breast milk in a bottle. From the end of November, she has been pumping to meet his needs. Max loves the two cats at his home, squealing with pleasure when he sees them. And, believe it or not, they actually allow him to touch them on occasion.

Our second arrival, Michael, was supposed to be our first baby! Born on August 28, 2008, he blessed the lives of Amy and Michael Armstrong, Sr. Mom returned to work at our Toughkenamon WIC Clinic in November and can be found pumping during lunch and before she drives home to provide breast milk for Michael. Lately, she has been very anxious to get home to see him. "Michael is doing something new and different every day. He's always smiling and happy!" she says.

Surviving a difficult pregnancy was tops on Kathleen McCarthy's list. With the baby in a Frank breech position, she was required to make many doctor visits before the scheduled c-section delivery day. Our only new baby girl, Abigail Marie, was born on November 11, 2008. New parents, Kevin and Kathleen, are especially proud to have had the first infant born on both sides of the family. Can you imagine how many adorable pink outfits Miss Abigail has!

Wyatt Joshua, the final little one to join our WIC family, was born on March 3, 2009, to Jason and Diana Cann. He joined his two-year-old sister, Bella, at home with mom who has put her career on hold for a while. Our staff knew Wyatt would be fully breastfed since we all remembered mom pumping at work to provide breast milk for Bella.

Even though it made for some difficult days and creative ways to staff our clinics, all of us are delighted with our new babes. For the two moms who returned to work, the pregnancy and childbirth experiences have magnified their ability to relate to our participants, and the rest of us have "adopted" the new additions and can't wait to see new pictures and hear the latest changes in our enhanced WIC staff. ■

WORLD BREASTFEEDING CELEBRATION IN DELAWARE

The Delaware WIC Program celebrated World Breastfeeding Week with more than 110 in attendance at an open house in The Dover Downs Hotel and Conference Center located in Dover, DE. Newly elected International Lactation Consultants Association (ILCA) President Cathy Carothers of Every Mother Inc., presented two dynamic and timely presentations "Breastfeeding: A Vital Emergency Response - Are you Ready?" and "Exclusive Breastfeeding: How to Make it Happen."

The Delaware WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Community Partners, which include The Bayhealth Foundation, The Latin American Community Center and Westside Family Health Center, along with Medela, provided free breastfeeding information and samples.

Delaware WIC Director Joanne White extended a special welcome to Delores Stewart of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office and Carol Jagers, chairperson of a very active Delaware Breastfeeding Coalition.

Ida Lawson, Breastfeeding Coordinator for Kent and Sussex Counties, recognized Hudson State Service Center (Northern Health Services) and Pyle State Service Center (Southern Health Services) for the greatest increase in breastfeeding rates, and Middletown State Service Center (Northern Health Services) and Williams State Service Center (Southern Health Services) for the highest number of exclusive breastfeeding mothers.

Ida also announced a new breastfeeding peer counselor partnership with Dr. Cecil Gordon, MD, PA. His private GYN Practice in Wilmington, DE, targets the African American Community, an at-risk population that traditionally has low breastfeeding rates. ■

PUERTO RICO'S SAN SEBASTIAN WIC CELEBRATES WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK

By Alma L. Ortega, Outreach Nutritionist

The WIC Program in the Puerto Rico municipality of San Sebastian celebrated World Breastfeeding Week with an activity for nursing mothers.

They recognized these WIC Program participants, awarded certificates to acknowledge their performance in the process of breastfeeding and attachment parenting.

Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Pilar Mercado made a presentation entitled, "Breastfeeding: A Vital Emergency Response," in keeping with the theme of this year. She emphasized the importance of continuing breastfeeding. "We do not know when an emergency might affect us, and breastfeeding saves lives," reinforced Pilar. ■



CELEBRATE — Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Pilar Mercado (seated) celebrates with the full-time breastfeeding mothers of Puerto Rico's San Sebastian WIC Clinic.

VIRGINIA'S PENINSULA WIC TEAMS UP WITH HEALTH DEPARTMENT OBESITY PROGRAM

Maternal Child Health Obesity Program Coordinator Cindy Richards-Myles, a health department employee, has partnered with three of the four Peninsula WIC sites to provide education to WIC participants during group nutrition education. She provides education on healthy eating habits, physical activities, proper nutrition and promoting family fitness. One of the goals during these sessions is to encourage WIC participants to commit to making one positive behavioral change within their family. For example, consuming more water daily or increasing the amount of calcium intake and physical activity.

The Children's Hospital of King's Daughters' "Healthy You's Countdown to Family Fitness" program stressed five fruits and vegetables, four servings of water, three servings of low-fat dairy, two hours or less of screen (TV) time and one hour or more of physical activity.

The education sessions have been very well received. Verbal affirmation as well as written evaluation shows that the majority of the WIC clients are willing to commit to making a behavioral change. ■



CINDY RICHARDS-MYLES

FIRST BOOK NATIONAL BOOK BANK DONATES OVER 155,000 BOOKS TO WEST VIRGINIA WIC PROGRAM

By Heidi Staats, State Outreach Coordinator

The First Book National Book Bank distributes large quantities of brand-new publisher-donated books to organizations serving children from low-income families. Book distributions are hosted by the First Book National Book Bank annually at a variety of sites across the United States. The books are free to organizations that are able to pick them up or pay just 35 cents per book to have them shipped. The First Book National Book Bank has once again awarded the West Virginia WIC Program free books which will be used for outreach as a way to reinforce the healthy habits supported through WIC services.

The Eagle Books are a series of four books that are brought to life by wise animal characters, Mr. Eagle and Miss Rabbit, and a clever trickster, Coyote, who engage Rain That Dances and his young friends in the joy of physical activity, eating healthy foods, and learning from their elders about health and diabetes prevention.

The first book, "Through The Eyes of The Eagle" introduces the characters of Mr. Eagle and Rain That Dances, the American Indian boy he befriends. Mr. Eagle reminds the young boy of the healthy ways of his ancestors. In "Knees Lifted High," the second book, Rain That Dances introduces Thunder Cloud, his best friend, to Mr. Eagle who encourages the boys to be physically active every day. The third book, "A Plateful of Color," introduces Miss Rabbit and the boys' friends, Little Hummingbird and Simon. Miss Rabbit teaches the value of eating a variety of colorful and healthy foods. "Tricky Treats," the final book in the series, introduces the character of Coyote, a trickster, and encourages children not to be tricked by coyote when choosing foods to eat.

This is the third time First Book has been so gracious to the WV WIC Program. In fact, our program application for this distribution was a request for a little less than 12,000 books to be shipped at a cost of 35 cents per book. When reviewing the application, First Book inquired as to our "pie in the sky" dream for using these books. Since the series is dedicated to diabetes prevention and healthy habits, our response shared a desire for every West Virginia family participating in WIC to receive the entire series. Three days later, First Book indicated they would feel honored to offer 155,808 books, providing equal amounts of each title in the series, plus deliver the books free of charge directly to our warehouse!

To get involved, register your organization at <http://register.firstbook.org>. After registering, you will receive notification via e-mail to alert you when book distribution applications are available. Your organization may be eligible to receive up to three books per child once per calendar year, excluding "special distributions." ■

PENNSYLVANIA WIC STAFF FROM FAYETTE COUNTY PROMOTE BREASTFEEDING WEEK

By Betty Zackal, RN, WIC Director, Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc.

Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc. (FCCAA) observed World Breastfeeding Week with the WIC staff wearing World Breastfeeding shirts August 3-7. The entire staff has enjoyed doing this for the past several years. This year was special with the recent birth of Luke Matthew, son of Maria Cavanagh, WIC nutritionist. Maria has breastfed three sons for at least their first year of life and she has returned to work and successfully pumped at work. Being a breastfeeding counselor, as is true for most of the FCCAA staff, Maria is a great example and advocate for breastfeeding at our agency. Staff can refer to Maria's success of "total breastfeeding, pumping, and returning to work" to help encourage our pregnant and breastfeeding moms. ■



BABY IN THE MIDDLE — Nutritionist Maria Cavanagh with her 6-week-old baby, Luke Matthew, are surrounded by (left to right) Cindy Bennett, RD; Betty Zackal, RN, WIC Director; Sheena Abraham, Breastfeeding and Nutrition Education Coordinator; Jennifer Kooser, Nutritionist; Nadine Rhoden, Receptionist; Mary J. Hepburn, Nutritionist; and Debbie Wilson, Retail Store Coordinator. Staff missing from the photo are Amy Griffiths, Nutritionist; Julie Brett, Nutritionist, and Amy Isabell, RN, CPA.

WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE TEAMS WITH VALLEY HEALTH'S HUNTINGTON WIC PROGRAM TO EDUCATE PARTICIPANTS ON CONTAINER GARDENING

By Jenna Rose, MA, RD, LD, Nutrition and Outreach Coordinator

In July, Susan Helo, a WIC Nutritionist, invited Melissa Stewart of the West Virginia State University Extension Service Master Gardener Program, to present in two WIC children nutrition education classes. The topic of container gardening and patio gardens seemed a perfect fit for participants living in small city areas with limited space.

Ms. Stewart provided tips such as size of containers needed for various plants, how to water plants properly, suitable locations for

plants depending on the plants' needs, and tips to help reduce insect and fungi damage to plants. In addition, the West Virginia State University Extension Service Master Gardener Program supplied WIC participants with tomato and pepper plants, containers, and soil, while parsley and thyme were provided by the WIC Program. During the hands-on activities, Melissa helped participants plant their vegetables and herbs; demonstrating how to properly stake their tomato plants. She also discussed

which plants could be planted together in the same pot.

Families participating in the WIC group education classes really enjoyed the hands-on approach. In addition, they all left with potted vegetables and herbs for their porches, patios, and decks. This experience encourages parents to garden at home with their children, which may in return increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables. ■



GARDEN MIRACLES, GARDEN TREASURES — Melissa Stewart, WV SU Extension Service Agent educating WIC participants on how to pot vegetable and herb plants.



ALL THINGS GROW WITH LOVE — WIC participants potting their vegetable and herb plants.



AN ANGEL BELONGS IN THE GARDEN — WIC participant Debra Hogsett encourages her son Tyler, to add his touch to planting their new tomato plant.

GETTING THE WORD OUT ABOUT CCI WIC-GREENBELT, MD

By Alexander Pe, Outreach Coordinator, CCI-Montgomery WIC

CCI-Montgomery WIC Program opened a clinic in Greenbelt, MD in October 2008. As CCI's newest site, CCI-WIC Greenbelt has the fewest number of participants. The facility is capable of serving a large caseload and there is a large population of potential participants in the area. To increase community awareness about WIC and the new clinic, CCI undertook an advertising campaign this summer with CBS Outdoor.

Banners in English and Spanish were posted for everyone to see on the exterior of 40 Metro buses serving the Greenbelt area from July to September. In addition, "interior bus cards" with "take one" leaflets inside the buses and posters on subway station platforms and entrance/exit ways advertised WIC and the new Greenbelt clinic to bus passengers and commuters. All CCI-WIC's advertising media had basic information about the WIC Program and contact numbers to schedule an appointment. The CCI-WIC Greenbelt staff expects a positive response in the form of many new WIC participants from its Metro advertising. ■

VIRGINIA'S RAPPAHANNOCK AREA HEALTH DISTRICT WIC OFFERS DENTAL HEALTH

Virginia's Rappahannock Area Health District WIC participants have had the opportunity to participate in a dental health education and fluoride varnish program. Working together, the Rappahannock Area Health District and the Virginia Division of Dental Health, under the Bright Smiles for Babies program, have been providing WIC children and infants with fluoride varnish and dental health education at their WIC visit.

Maternal and Early Child Oral Health Coordinator Susan Pharr and dental hygienist Olivia Loving have been instrumental in providing the services to RAHD's WIC participants. Since February, Olivia has been traveling to different WIC clinics within the district to speak with clients about oral health and provide a fluoride varnish which is painted on teeth to prevent new cavities and help stop cavities that have already started. Many parents are surprised that children as young as 12-18 months can get cavities, and that the first dental visit is recommended by the first birthday.

The program goes hand-in-hand with WIC's messages to wean from the bottle by one year and limit sugary drinks and snacks, especially between meals. WIC participants who are interested in receiving the services are seen that day after completing their WIC appointment. The program has been a great success among participants, many having never seen a dentist or dental health professional before. Since beginning the program, over 1,169 children and infants in the district have received the fluoride varnish. ■

PENNSYLVANIA'S ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT WIC PROMOTES FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

By Candis Sines-Westerberg

Pennsylvania's Allegheny County Health Department WIC Program staff has been promoting the use of fruits and vegetables with the families. They are educating families about a new fruit and vegetable voucher coming to WIC in October, as well as the Farmers' Market vouchers, which are part of the Pennsylvania WIC Program. One of the tools staff uses to encourage more fruit and vegetables, as well as educate families about the fruit and vegetable vouchers, is the Sesame Street Health Habits for Life kit. It has a storybook as well as a Sesame Street DVD which encourages healthy food and lifestyle choices, including trying new fruits and vegetables. It is a fun way to encourage healthy eating and a great incentive for families! ■



SESAME STREET COMES TO PITTSBURGH — WIC Nutritionist Melissa Ruse (left) and Nutrition Services Assistant James Satterwhite are showing the Sesame Street Healthy Habits for Life kits. Joining in the fun are (seated, from left to right) participants from the Downtown Pittsburgh WIC office: Da-Niah Clark with BIG Tomato, Caydence Sifers-Stokes with Elmo, and Na'din Best with Cookie Monster.

MARWIC TIMES Calendar

- NJ WIC National Farmers' Market Conference. Atlantic City, NJ. October 12-16.
- Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo (FNCE). Denver, CO. October 17- 20.
- The deadline for the Fall issue of MARWIC TIMES is November 18, 2009. Please submit articles, photos and calendar events to your State editor. No Polaroid pictures used. 5" x 7" digital photos (saved as JPGs, please) preferred. All photographs must include a detailed caption.

MARYLAND'S PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY WIC GOES TO THE FARMERS' MARKET

By Jane Ghaffari, RD, LDN, Acting Director Prince George's County WIC Program

MD's Prince George's County WIC Program implemented a new initiative this past summer to give out farmers' market coupons at the farmers' markets as well as in the clinics. WIC nutritionists have been present at the markets to distribute the coupons, give nutritional advice and assist the participants to select seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables. Many of the WIC participants had never been to a farmers' market before and were not familiar with local produce. They were excited to see the nutritionists at the markets ready to help them and answer their questions.

During June, the initiative was a huge success for both the WIC participants and farmers. One market manager sent an e-mail to express his gratitude for our attendance. ■



LENDING A HAND — Prince George's County WIC Nutritionist Nica Miano (right) assists a WIC participant at a farmers' market.

PENNSYLVANIA'S COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM OF LANCASTER COUNTY WIC PRESENTS AT MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY

By Sharon Wasneuski, MS, WIC Director, Community Action Program (CAP) of Lancaster County, Inc.

On March 31, Jennifer Schaefer, RD, CAP of Pennsylvania's Lancaster WIC Program, gave a presentation "Eat Your Way to the Top" at the 22nd Annual Women in Mathematics and Science Conference at Millersville University of Pennsylvania. The purpose of the conference is to encourage young women, grades 7-12, in science and mathematics by giving them opportunities to meet with a variety of professional women role models who have successfully pursued scientific and mathematically oriented careers.

During the presentation, Jennifer explained how to become a nutritionist or dietitian, emphasizing the importance to speak a second language like Spanish, as she does. Jennifer continued the presentation by describing the services provided by CAP/WIC of Lancaster County. These program services included how to apply for WIC, anthropometrics, nutrition and breastfeeding counseling, and issuance of WIC checks.

The students truly enjoyed the hands-on activities and readily volunteered to assist Jennifer in completing a nutrition assessment. The presentation ended when Jennifer encouraged the young women to EAT TO LIVE, NOT LIVE TO EAT. Dr. Ximena Catepillán, the chair of the conference committee, has invited Jennifer to speak at the 23rd Annual Women in Mathematics and Science Conference on April 6, 2010. As a result of the positive feedback from this successful presentation, Jennifer also spoke to graduating seniors at Lancaster County Academy on May 12.

Kudos to Jennifer for representing nutrition professionals so well! ■



PRESENTING SCIENCE IN A POSITIVE LIGHT — Ximena Catepillán, PhD, Millersville University of PA and Jennifer Schaefer, RD, CAP of the Lancaster County WIC Program pause for photo during the conference.

MAKING WIC A FUN PLACE TO BE IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND

By Sandy Webb, RN, CNP
Director, Southern Maryland WIC

Southern Maryland WIC has found one more way to encourage children to eat healthy. Murals displaying animals and healthy foods have been added to each room. Jim Hicks from JBH Graphic Design designed and painted the animals on the walls in the Lexington Park and White Plains offices. The designs include a pink hippo with tomatoes and broccoli, a seal juggling eggs, fish and eggplant, a toucan balancing milk on his beak, an elephant with peanut butter and peanuts on his trunk and, in the breastfeeding room, a momma and baby kangaroo.



Each mural is about four feet high. The children love them and like to name all the animals and foods. With recent renovations, the clinic space is roomy and personal. But

these animals have really added a special touch that keeps the kids engaged and feeling that WIC is a fun place to be! ■



NEW JERSEY'S NORTH HUDSON WIC HOSTS SECOND ANNUAL FAIR "SPRING INTO GOOD HEALTH"

By Karen Lazarowitz, MS, RD, Chief Nutritionist

NJ's North Hudson Community Action Corporation (NHCAC) WIC Program held its second annual health fair, "Spring Into Good Health." The theme of the fair was the promotion of fruit and vegetable consumption, physical fitness and other positive health behaviors. Approximately 500 WIC participants and local community residents came to participate in the nutrition-focused games and to learn about good nutrition and health behaviors. The children were excited to make paintings of fruits and vegetables and to decorate visors and hats with fruit and vegetable stickers. They also planted lettuce and herb seeds in pots to take home. The process was a great learning experience for them to observe how fruits and vegetables grow.

The children also enjoyed playing, "Can you help the monkey be healthy?" by aiding the stuffed monkey to place foods in their correct food groups. The adults and children competed in jump rope and hula hoop competitions and played "Race for Health," where they ran to pick up healthy foods. The winners were awarded with "Fruit & Veggies More Matters" water bottles and everyone received the NHCAC WIC Program cookbooks, "Fun Kid's Recipes," and "I Love Fruit Coloring Books."

Whole Foods Market supported the fair by donating four cases of fruit, 300 bottles of water and 100 reusable bags that were distributed to fair attendees. Asprocolas Acres set up a farm stand giving WIC participants the opportunity to use their Farmers' Market checks and for the local community to purchase fresh produce. The nutritionists conducted food demonstrations of fun and healthy snacks with the farmers' produce, groceries donated by Trader Joe's and cereal donated by General Mills.

The NHCAC Health Center participated by offering free screenings of blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose and having their health and social service departments attend. The Dental, Pediatrics, Women's Health, Internal Medicine, Head Start and Children First Child Care Departments and Programs were present to explain to people their services. Hudson Perinatal Consortium provided information and distributed "Hi Baby" pregnancy journals, child safety locks and coolers. People also had the opportunity to learn about Medicaid affiliated health insurance and Early Intervention. The North Hudson Fire Department also participated by demonstrating fire safety behaviors.

The fair was a great success. Reporters from The Hudson Reporter and Cablevision interviewed fair participants and provided media coverage. The children and adults reported how much fun they had and how thrilled they were to receive health and nutrition education at such an event. Many are already looking forward to our next fair. ■



A "FAIRY" GOOD DAY – Participants young and old enjoyed the festivities at the North Hudson WIC Health Fair.

A WV WIC PARTICIPANT SAYS THANKS: BUILDING PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION THROUGH CUSTOMER SERVICE

By Heidi Staats, State Outreach Coordinator

There are many ways in which WIC clinics differ, but there's one way in which every clinic is the same: every clinic has participants. Participant satisfaction impacts community image and retention, and at its core, good customer service is about employees treating participants in the manner they prefer—with respect, courtesy, speed.

The following letter was received by the West Virginia WIC State office:

I received a phone call on 5/19/09 to see if we could come on 5/20 rather than 6/2. Barb was very kind and offered an afternoon time as she felt it would be easier to get ready with a four-year-old and five-month-old. She explained what to bring, etc. When we arrived we waited no longer than five minutes. I saw three different people and they were all extremely helpful and courteous. I was very impressed with the fact that they weigh, measure and finger stick right there. I just moved here from...and was never treated with such kindness and courtesy as we were here. No one ever sat and spoke to me about my son's eating/appetite, etc. Barb talked to me at length about how I might be able to get him eating better/healthier. She took her time and offered some great ideas. She then offered some pamphlets to take home and a kid's cookbook. This was a great idea because my son loves to help me in the kitchen. She then showed me a book I could go to the library or bookstore to buy about children and picky eaters. Barb was very, very helpful. We then talked about my infant and his formula, etc. Barb explained everything to me that I needed to know about where we can shop, what to buy, etc. They do a wonderful job. Unfortunately, I lost my job last summer and needed some public assistance to help with food, etc. It can be somewhat embarrassing, especially for someone with a four-year college degree. However, I was not uncomfortable at this WIC office at all. They were nice, respectful and were genuinely concerned about my kids and their health. Thank you for the pleasant experience and convenience of not having to go to a doctor, get weighed and measured, then get a prescription for the finger stick, go to a lab and wait a week then go to the WIC office, where I would normally have waited over an hour with two small children.

Sincerely,
M.W.

Thank you to the WIC employees of the Hancock County WIC Program for translating our organizational mission, vision and values into behaviors. ■

WEST VIRGINIA FINDS STATE AND LOCAL COLLABORATION BENEFICIAL WITH NEW FOOD PACKAGE IMPLEMENTATION

By Heidi Staats, WV WIC Outreach Coordinator

West Virginia WIC has been consistently involved over the last several years in completing projects with an interactive approach between local and state staff. The new WIC food package implementation is the first major project that has tested this interactive approach. A facilitated committee process involving local and state WIC employees for implementation, planning and material development has already accomplished many tasks.

In response to WIC Federal Regulations revising the food packages, a project work plan and timeline initiated the formal approach West Virginia chose to implement needed program changes. This implementation plan as well as a comprehensive communication and stakeholder input plan were adopted on October 1, 2008. The state office revised the West Virginia food selection criteria. Research and data collection of foods (i.e. nutrition analysis for WIC eligibility) as well as WV supply system and availability was a task undertaken by the state nutrition unit and vendor unit. This work completed by the state office allowed for productive, quick-paced, collaborative, interactive committees to complete tasks in as short as two face-to-face meetings.

The Food List Committee started convening on November 13, 2008. By April 6, 2009, a new shopping guide containing authorized WIC foods for our state was submitted for regional office approval. The Participant Education Committee has completed a Facilitator's Guide containing 13 participant education tools in only two face-to-face meetings. Training modules are currently available for prerequisite staff training study as well as quick reference. All staff training occurred August 5-7, and the Staff Education Committee drafted an agenda containing four tracks that every employee completed in two days. The Vendor Education Committee continues the work of developing and implementing a WIC vendor training curriculum that contains a vendor handbook, manager training manual and presentation, cashier training handbook, vendor shopping guide and cash value voucher tool. WV WIC authorized vendors began training at the end of August.

The West Virginia WIC Program has developed a branding identifier to assist with the launch of the revised shopping guide and improved food packages. The slogan "Love to Grow" encompasses the key values of love, family, health, choice and future. It suggests that loving actions and choices for children are what ensure their growth and development into healthy adults. These loving actions and choices include breastfeeding, choosing and preparing healthy foods, and teaching children healthy habits which will be the focus of nutrition messages during implementation. The use of the word "grow" along with appropriate visuals can also be a subtle reference to food that grows – the fresh fruits and vegetables that are now a part of the WIC food package. "Love to Grow" is a very warm and emotional approach to reinforcing the impact the adult behaviors can have on a growing child.

An interactive approach between local and state WIC staff has proven successful in completing several objectives simultaneously without work falling to only a few employees. Meeting evaluations also indicate committee participants find this approach productive and rewarding: "One of best, most productive WIC meetings I've been to."

A "Love to Grow" Advisory Council, consisting of local WIC staff, state WIC staff, WIC vendors, and community partners such as physicians, will continue the work of food package education and kick off. The facilitated committee will guide the local offices and provide support for evaluation. In



LOVE TO GROW PARTICIPANT EDUCATION RESOURCES — *The WV WIC Love to Grow Participant Education Manual is a collection of tools for WIC educators to use as they help families develop a better understanding of the food packages. The manual has three sections, Food Packages, Healthy Habits for Life and Breastfeeding, providing many resources to help with participant education efforts for food package implementation and beyond.*



LOVE TO GROW SHOPPING GUIDE—*The WV WIC Love to Grow Shopping Guide is a pictured-based guide of the approved and not allowed types of food participants may purchase with WIC vouchers. The shopping guide also offers helpful instructions for WIC participants and vendors with colored tabs for easy reference to specific types of authorized foods.*

addition, developing the Love to Grow Advisory Council strengthens communication between all invested audiences (state staff, local staff, participants, vendors and community partners) and facilitates cross-training necessary for effective technical assistance. Ultimately, the Love to Grow Advisory Council will strengthen materials and training to build a strong WIC community. ■

NEW JERSEY'S BURLINGTON COUNTY WIC BENEFITS FROM LOCAL AREA AGENCIES

By Deepthi Das

Burlington County (NJ) WIC Program believes in the best practice open areas for the WIC clients, to enjoy and receive the best services from all other local programs at WIC clinics during their WIC appointment. The local agency staff and administrators keep in close contact with all the programs under the local agency geographical area by providing and receiving periodic in-services to these programs.

The local agency has requested "Latino Services of Burlington County" attend the WIC clinics to help the WIC clients adjust/install their car seats under their program called "Child Passenger Seat Safety." A representative from the Latino Services of Burlington County attends WIC clinics at their main office at the Health Department twice a month to demonstrate proper installation of car seats. The presentation is conducted before the Prenatal/Breastfeeding classes and before Infant Nutrition classes. Latino Services offers a raffle in each class to win either a car seat or basket packed with baby items.

The local agency acknowledges it would not be as successful without the generous help of some of the local area school children and their parents.

The South Valley Elementary School (Moorestown) students have been donating a significant amount of books each year for more than

five years. This year the school children have donated books for all ages and each WIC family has received three books of their choice. The Burlington County WIC Program would like to extend our heart-filled thanks to our South Valley Elementary School children, parents, and school authorities for always keeping WIC families in their heart and mind.

The Burlington County WIC Program would also like to extend its thanks on behalf of WIC families to the Tabernacle Elementary School for donating pajamas to WIC families for the last three winters.

Other programs offered to WIC clients by outside agencies include registering for baby showers offered by various agencies and offering dental hygiene information and low-cost dental care provided by dental students from Burlington County College. Additionally, those who have been WIC clients for more than five years receive constant services from programs including NJ Family Care and Preventive Plus for Moms Quit Connection. In addition, the Lead Nurse from VIRTUA Nursing attends WIC main office clinic every Friday and periodically visits the satellite clinics to test WIC children for lead.

Keeping WIC clients connected to other agencies is one of the best things we can do. ■

PRINCE WILLIAM HEALTH DISTRICT IS MAKING A BIG SPLASH ALL OVER NORTHERN VIRGINIA FOR WIC OUTREACH

If people haven't heard about WIC, don't blame the staff. As you'll see, staff has been reaching out in myriad ways to get the word out!

In April, Nutritionist Senior Emily Kovacs participated in a Comcast Local Edition interview discussing WIC Program eligibility and benefits. This was a 4 ½-minute program that was aired for the entire month of May on Comcast cable stations in the local area. Emily did a wonderful job representing the Program.

Bilingual Nutritionist Associate Maria Velasco filmed a television outreach interview on Panorama Latino, a local Hispanic community television program where she also discussed WIC Program eligibility criteria and

benefits. The 5-minute segment aired throughout the local community for the entire month of June, providing WIC extensive outreach to the Latino Community. Maria reported that while shopping at the local Costco, several Hispanic customers approached her saying, "You are the one that was on television."

In August, Emily again represented WIC when she participated in a television interview on local Channel 26. She provided information regarding WIC eligibility and benefits, and contact information to the local community.

All staff at Prince William Health District has provided support to the WIC Program by sponsoring WIC specific VALU-PAK flyers that were sent to over 5,000 homes in the

community to advertise WIC benefits, eligibility criteria and contact information. This was a one-time event that provided tremendous outreach connectivity to the local community.

On a continuing basis, Health Educator Elizabeth Hurts conducts extensive outreach efforts within the local community on behalf of the WIC Program. Elizabeth visits prenatal clinics, community clinics, and organizations such as BirthRight and CareNet, to provide WIC referral forms and Program information to their clients. This community effort has been extremely successful and WIC is grateful for Elizabeth's assistance.

In a nutshell, Prince William has been very busy. ■



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